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Slideshow

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Vocabulary Teaching in Action

Indiantown, FL • April 20, 2007

Topic: Teaching Literacy in English to K-5 English Learners

Practice: Teach Vocabulary

Highlights

- How Warfield organizes vocabulary instruction according to Isabel Beck's three-tier model
- Examples of instructional strategies that are used

About the Site

Warfield Elementary School (K-4)

Indiantown, FL

Demographics

75% Hispanic, 5% White, 17% Black

96% Free or reduced-price lunch

67% Limited English proficient

Warfield Elementary School uses an inclusive, English immersion approach for their English learners, the majority of whom are of Guatemalan descent and speak either Spanish or one of several Guatemalan Indian dialects, which lack a written language. Distinctive features of the school include:

- A continuous improvement model for instruction; data disaggregation and analysis, facilitated by a reading coach and writing/math coach, drive all instruction
- Instructional calendars for all content areas and grade levels that show standards being taught, instructional activities, and assessments to monitor student progress
- A schoolwide reading program based on an external model, along with a core textbook program
- Data available to teachers on fast turnaround, either in profiles produced by the reading coach or through reports from district and state databases
- Whole-group instruction based on the instructional calendars, combined with flexible small-group instruction based on students' needs
- Interventions provided within the classroom, including several that are technology-based
- Instructional strategies that are research-based; for example, a vocabulary program that is based on Isabel Beck's research
- All teachers with an ESOL endorsement on their teaching certificates
- Paraprofessionals who speak the children's native languages to ease the transition into school and support teachers in working with students

Full Transcript

Intro Slide: Vocabulary Teaching in Action, Warfield Elementary

This slideshow describes eight strategies that Warfield’s teachers use to increase students’ vocabularies. Also take a look at the “Teaching Word Meaning” slideshow to follow a lesson in depth.

Slide #1: Vocabulary Throughout the Day

Warfield Elementary School provides a rich language environment that promotes vocabulary development for all students, especially English learners. Instruction and practice using all kinds of words—everyday words, “juicy words,” and content specific words—are threaded throughout the day in all classroom instruction at Warfield.

Slide #2: Instructional Context

Vocabulary instruction occurs in a variety of contexts. This teacher is working with her whole class on the meaning of the word “coincidence.”

Slide #3: Parts of Words

This teacher is working with her class on adding -er and -est suffixes to adjectives and related spelling rules. Good vocabulary instruction isn’t just the meaning of words. It also focuses on parts of words like prefixes, roots, and suffixes, as seen in this lesson, and how words change when used in different ways in sentences.

Slide #4: Vocabulary Centers

There are also vocabulary centers in classrooms. These centers have a wealth of materials, and students can practice words with a teacher or other students or complete a number of vocabulary activities.

Slide #5: Computer-Assisted Instruction

Warfield uses computer-assisted instruction to provide individual student practice in vocabulary. Here a student is identifying pictures of things that could be described with the adjective “dainty.”

Slide #6: Graphic Organizers

Use of graphic organizers is a standard part of instruction. Notice that the web format not only defines and reinforces the target word “anchor,” but also provides exposure and practice to a number of synonyms.

Slide #7: Four Square

A typical activity used by all the teachers is “four square.” Students write the word, write a definition of the word, use the word in a sentence, and draw a picture. This really helps students to understand and remember the words they are being taught.

Slide #8: Word Wheel

Another favorite is the “word wheel.” The targeted word is in the center of the wheel. Phrases that exemplify the meaning are written in the top half of the wheel in green; phrases that are counter-examples of the word’s meaning are in red at the bottom half of the wheel.

Slide #9: Juicy Words

Target words in the vocabulary program are referred to as “juicy words.” A few words are taught each week, and they are posted in a cumulative fashion in the classroom so students may refer back to them.

Slide #10: Tracking Words

Classes track the number of times they hear or use juicy words. Strategies like this keep students aware of and interested in words. The school’s assistant principal relates a no-nonsense, discipline-related conversation with a student, “Do you think it was a coincidence...?” only to have the student comment on “coincidence” as a juicy word. She didn’t know whether to be concerned that the student missed her point about his behavior or happy that he was expanding his vocabulary!

Slide #11: Acting Out

Physically acting-out the meaning of words is another instructional strategy that is widely used. Look at the words posted behind these students. Can you guess which word they are acting out?

Slide #12: Go Beyond Basic Words

This student’s dramatization of “stern” is very eloquent. We might take it as a stern reminder that all students, including English learners, don’t benefit from being taught only basic words. Learning more literate, descriptive words is well within their grasp with the right instruction—and will create an appetite for learning and using words that will serve them well throughout their educational careers.